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rial Collection is composed of a group of contemporary American paintings of the highest quality, given to the Institute by Mrs. Charles Cranston Bovey and Mrs. Charles Deere Velie, in memory of their father. Mr. John S. Bradstreet has undertaken the decoration of a room in which he will install an interesting selection from his collection of works of art. Mr. Frank W. Little has given to the Society a large and important collection of Japanese prints. The Society owns a growing collection of paintings acquired in recent years, and many purchases have been made during the last year for exhibition in the new museum. Galleries on the main floor are to be devoted to the exhibition of sculptures, paintings and decorative arts of the principal periods up to the nineteenth century.

There will be five of these period rooms: a Gothic room, a Renaissance room, a seventeenth century room, and two for the eighteenth century. In these rooms will be assembled paintings, sculptures, and other works of art of the different periods. There will also be a

large gallery devoted to Oriental art. When the administration offices are removed to the ground floor, the galleries thus freed will be devoted to the exhibition of the older periods of art and will permit an expansion of the Oriental collection. In the corridors and three connecting galleries there will be exhibited a carefully selected collection of casts, the gift of Mr. Russell M. Bennett. The casts will eventually be placed in another part of the completed building, where a large architectural hall with side galleries will be provided for their installation. The upper floor, with top-lighted galleries, will be used for the exhibition of the permanent collection of modern pictures and for loan collections. A series of alcoves in one of the long corridors will afford attractive opportunities for the arrangement of collections of prints, drawings and small sculptures.

Mr. Joseph Breck is the director and the officers are Eugene J. Carpenter and John R. Van Derlip, Vice-Presidents; Harry W. Rubins, Secretary; Perry Harrison, Treasurer; F. W. Hornibrook, Assistant Treasurer.

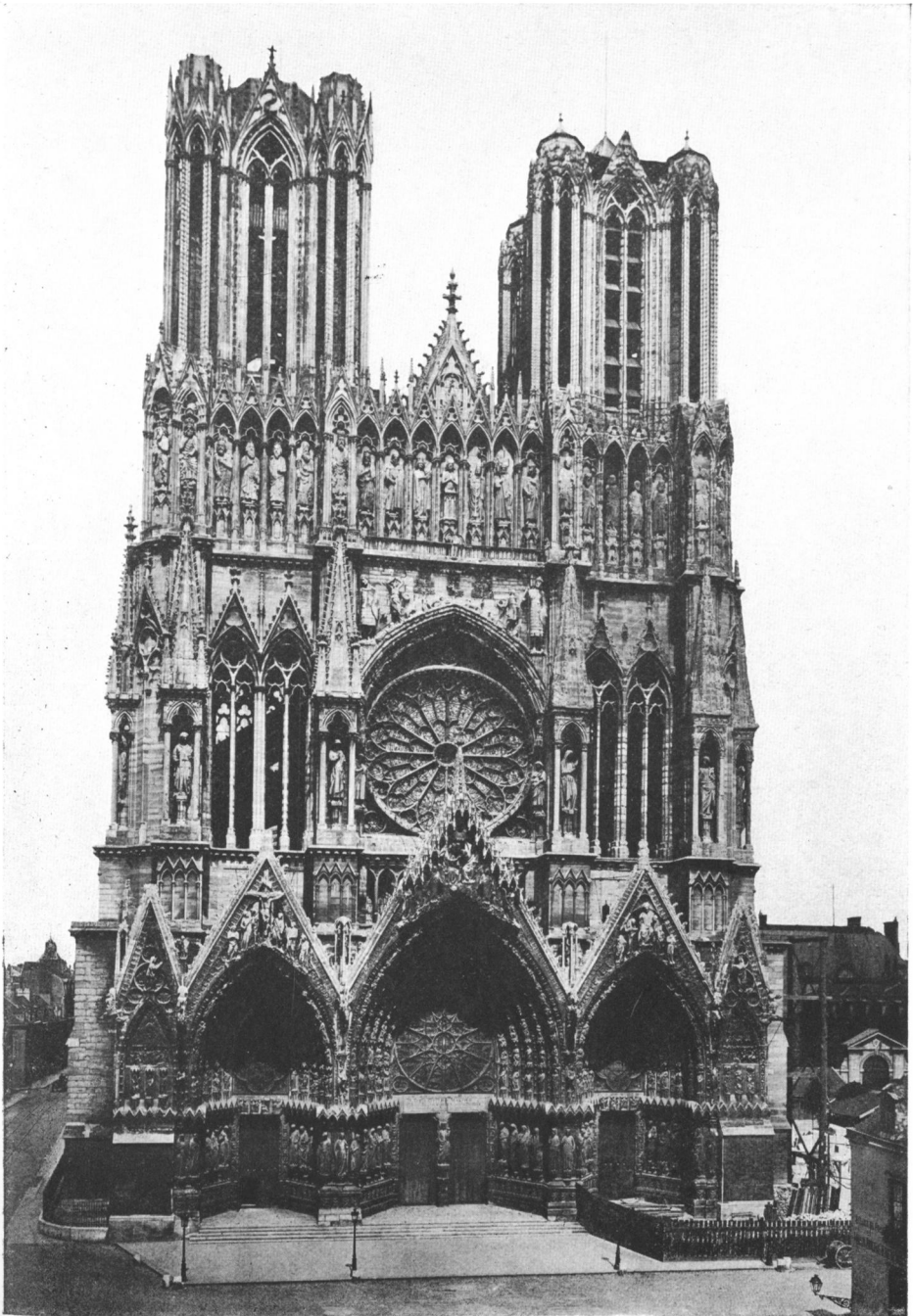
## THE LOSS OF RHEIMS

BY SEWARD HUME RATHBUN

**R**HEIMS CATHEDRAL is in ruins. One of the great architectural masterpieces of the Middle Ages and of the world has been battered by shells and blackened by flames. The news of this disaster brought a distinct sense of loss to all of us. To the more casual, perhaps, it was merely the loss of a beautiful building, famed for its sculptures, glass, and sumptuous furnishings, a loss which with money and adequate skill might, in time, be made good again. "The Cathedral," I have heard it said, "will, of course, be restored—if necessary, rebuilt." Such a thing is impossible. Rheims, rebuilt, with its manifold forms accurately reproduced and with its

stained-glass remade, if these things could be done, would even then be nothing more than a hollow copy of Rheims, a splendid model of what had been. No builder of today could give it back its soul. That was part of the spirit and the aspirations of the Middle Ages, crystallized into stone, a lesson for future generations; a supreme naïf self-revelation of Medievalism, that none but the Middle Ages themselves could produce. And the Middle Ages are gone.

They are gone, but here at Rheims, as elsewhere, they left us an interpreter of their struggles, a huge sphinx-like form, brooding over the city as you saw it in the dusk. But this medieval sphinx



THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME AT RHEIMS

ONE OF THE FINEST GOTHIC CATHEDRALS IN EUROPE NOW IN RUINS

was not impenetrably baffling, it had no riddle to ask, it demanded no human sacrifice. It remained through the centuries, sometimes ignored, sometimes scorned, only latterly given its true worth, an oracle of the past, speaking to all who cared to hear. Multitudes of human histories are interwoven in the story of its making. Some of the most wonderful pageants in the history of France were acted under its vaults, for here the kings of France were crowned. As one stood in the little square by the statue of Joan of Arc, who, in the cathedral beyond, realized her ambition when the Dauphin Charles received the crown as king; as one looked up at the façade massed above him—the three deep portals set with sculpture, the elaborate rose window under its pointed arch, the gallery of the statues of the kings and the open towers crowning all—a myriad tales were represented before him where the fancy of the artist craftsman had filled niche and canopy and doorway with figures, many of them almost Greek in their purity of conception. The recessed portals were crowded with them. They were ranged across the great façade—Christ, the Madonna, saints and kings, each with his or her significance in the great scheme, each telling his or her story or woven with others into a larger story—a prodigious variety in magnificent order.

Some critics have considered this the finest of Gothic cathedrals. Perhaps that is too much to say, for in certain respects Amiens and Chartres possess a restraint, which, although it was not lacking here, was less perfect. Rheims represented the full expression of the thirteenth century style. To have gone further than this would have been to break over into the more decorative phases of the later work which marked the beginning of the decline of Gothic art. Rheims certainly stopped short of that.

The type of all the great cathedrals was the same—a type fixed by the ritual of the Medieval Church—nave, transepts and choir met at right angles to form a Latin cross. The choir was ter-

minated by a semi-color apse, with the aisles that flanked the nave carried around it to form an ambulatory for the religious processions. From this again opened chapels. All these things Rheims had in common with Amiens, Chartres, Paris and the others, but in one way it differed from them. These cathedrals were the work of many years, some of them of centuries. As they grew, the Gothic style grew with them and as the style changed so the buildings as they mounted upwards changed also. Paris and Chartres both had their beginnings almost in the Romanesque. They were not built from plans and specifications as we would build them today. They were carried forward gradually and with no attempt to hide the changes that took place in the style. Each part is frankly the product of that phase current at the time when it was constructed. We can trace the development step by step, but, except where more modern vandalism has crept in, there is no incongruity, for this development, a natural one, is orderly. But at Rheims, for some reason, not even such changes were admitted, and the whole fabric followed the type of the thirteenth century Gothic at its height, although, before the façade was completed, the style had elsewhere grown away into other phases. Some of the later work, perhaps, deteriorated in its execution, but the feeling throughout was that of complete unity. The building was never finished. The Middle Ages died too soon for that and the paganism of the Renaissance was hardly calculated to continue what had been commenced. Two great towers, comparable to those of the west front, were destined to flank each transept, and still another was intended to rise above the whole from the center of the cross. These towers were carried further than we have seen them in our day, but parts of them were destroyed in the fire of 1481 and were never rebuilt.

This very lack of completion is significant. The ideals of the Middle Ages were too vast for attainment. The Holy Roman Empire was never in fact the empire it pretended to be. The spiritual

unity of Christendom under the Pope could not be accomplished. Magnificent as these conceptions were, they were impossible, impossible because of their very scope. It was so, also, with the great buildings of the period. They were planned on too large a scale and their present incompleteness shows us, today, both the power and the limitations of their age, the power to dream dreams that could never be realized. Here again we find these cathedrals interpreters of the time and race that created them, and not merely in this are they expressive. They are more than incomplete results of unattainable aspirations, more than massive carved stone story-books, more than wonderful imaginings of pinnacles and towers, or daringly studied engineering feats, balancing thrust and counter-thrust.

The Middle Age was a feverish age, an age of remarkable energy and, as I have said, of splendid desires both spiritually and politically. And the architecture it created is feverish. Its very principles are those of unrest, of active forces, one supporting or relieving another, quite the opposite of the principles that underlie the architecture of Greece where the simple downward pressure of lintel upon column marks no conception of the unattainable, but rather expresses a completed ideal. The Greek architecture mirrored the age that produced it just as did the Gothic, or to be more specific, Rheims, where slender clustered piers rose and branched to the high pointed arches of the nave, rose again until they grew into the ribs that supported the vaults and met the ribs that had grown from other slender piers. Rooted outside, the buttresses climbed through the walls of the aisles and broke into free arches that sprang up to support the weight of these same vaults. All was energy. Every stone was at work and there was hardly one whose work was not needed. The masonry was reduced to a minimum. The building was all windows—a great vessel of air and light dimmed above by the gleaming color of old glass, just as the clear religious conceptions of Christianity were

clouded and colored by the mystical stories of saints and martyrs.

It is for all these reasons that the loss of such a building as the cathedral at Rheims is a great loss. It is because of these that it can never be rebuilt or restored to what it was. It was a living thing descended from the past. On it the men of the Middle Ages had consciously cut the storied beliefs by which they endeavored to regulate their lives, and with every stone of it they unconsciously built in a little of the energy of the stirring time in which they lived. It was as Victor Hugo says, in speaking of Notre Dame in Paris, "a vast symphony in stone, if we may so express it, the colossal work of a man and of a nation, combining unity with complexity, like the *Iliads* and the *Romanceros* to which it is a sister production—the prodigious result of a draught upon the whole resources of an era, in which upon every stone is seen displayed, in a hundred varieties, the fancy of the workman disciplined by the genius of the artist—a sort of human Creation, in short, mighty and prolific as the Divine Creation, of which it seems to have caught the double character, variety and eternity."

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Mr. and Mrs. Robert Vonnoh will hold a joint exhibition by special invitation in the Carnegie Institute in November and in the Chicago Art Institute in December. The opening date in Pittsburgh is November 15th and in Chicago December 10th. Mrs. Vonnoh will be represented by about thirty-five works in sculpture and Mr. Vonnoh by about sixty-five paintings, comprising portraits, figure paintings, and landscapes. The exhibition will be distinctly retrospective in character, covering a period of some years. Among Mrs. Vonnoh's works will be the statuette portrait of Mrs. Sayre, and with Mr. Vonnoh's paintings will be the Wilson group painted two summers ago at Cornish. He will also show portraits of Hon. Charles Francis Adams, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, Daniel Chester French, Jay Cooke, Talcott Williams, and others.